!We Are Not Jazz¡ Liminal Jazz in the Music of La Distritofónica, Bogotá, Colombia

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Abstract

The present article examines the problem that arises in the relationship between jazz, experimental music, and sense of place. Considering the music of La Distritofónica, a musical collective from Bogotá, Colombia, I discuss hegemonic definitions of jazz that conceive the problem of music ontology from an aural perspective. These definitions, which relate La Distritofónica to the sphere of free jazz, become insufficient to define the complexity of the phenomena, translating the question to the relations between jazz and place. From this point of view, the case of La Distritofónica exemplifies an intrinsic link between a particular ontology of jazz and Latin American experimental music, which leads me to see La Distritofónica as a metaphor of the soundscape of the city of Bogotá that critiques the political and sonic circumstances of this particular place but still situates the phenomena as a liminal and abject one in the jazz-experimental binary.

I argue that it is in the intersubjective communicative condition of free improvisation that an ontology can be located that explains the music of La Distritofónica in relation to Bogotá, allowing me to decenter the notions of a "work of art" or "standard" as the dominant conceptualization of jazz music. Instead, La Distritofónica allows us to rethink the ancillary circumstance of improvisation in jazz. I bring into discussion the nonprescriptive aesthetic of La Distritofónica; the way its music dialogues with other music, bringing them into its artistic discourse; and its liminal status as an "undefinable" object that manifests an aural aspect of the city of Bogota. I discuss the matter in question from the voices of the members of the community and mediatic information that exemplifies the nexus between the

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music of La Distritofónica and Bogotá to explain the metaphor and the breakpoint between ontologies of jazz and experimental music.

Jazz made in Latin America is a version, not a repetition, of what American musicians make and perform in cities like New York. To understand this point is to understand that artists pursuing jazz outside of the United States conceive it as more than simply a genre of music, but as a way of understanding and being "into" the music. Jazz becomes a kind of *lingua franca*, following Julian Ruesga, around which musicians from all over the world have revolved, but, I insist, it must be understood as a language that has been critically and creatively adapted in each place. With this in mind, this article brings into discussion jazz made in Colombia, which has been observed from different angles. Some treatment of this topic in prior scholarship has been historical and historiographical, focusing on both the history of the music in Colombia and on the configuration of discourses around jazz in educational and cultural fields.[1] Building on this background, this article aims to critically address one of the most relevant phenomena within the genre in the last twenty years. I refer to the case of the music collective known as La Distritofónica.

The article will be divided into five sections. In the first part, I will describe the musical phenomenon that is La Distritofónica, presenting the aesthetic intention of the project and its music in a general way. In the second section, I build on this description by raising an ontological problem in jazz studies that questions the differential problem between "works of art" and improvisations. In a third section, I will delve deeper into the subject of improvisation by drawing upon the ideas of philosophers Donald Davidson and Sam McAuliffe, framing the practice as an intersubjective circuit that allows for communication between jazz and experimental music in the city of Bogotá. In a fourth section, I complexify the case by understanding the music of La Distritofónica as a disruptive and abject event from an aural perspective that links the collective with noise, transforming it into a liminal phenomenon. In a final section, I argue that the music of La Distritofónica can be understood as a process of entextualization of Bogota's sonosphere, offering an answer to the question of how the city of Bogotá sounds.

La Distritofónica: An Indefinable Phenomenon

"Delirium, tropical noise, country metal, South American folklore, noise and experimental jazz" have been some of the eclectic adjectives used in the media to describe the sound of La Distritofónica, a Bogota-based musical collective and record label founded in 2004.[2] According to its mission statement, the collective's goal is to provide "a platform to support the independent music of young Bogotá musicians who take as their aesthetic starting point the traditional languages of the coasts, the interior,

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and urban music (jazz, rock, electronic, [and] classical) to develop an open and plural language consistent with the guidelines of contemporary musical vanguards."[3]

On the one hand, the collective brings together local and national music traditions with more popular genres such as jazz and rock. Its mission suggests a framework of globalization in line with the concept of multiculturalism, a goal that echoes language inscribed in the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Colombia. This aspect of the collective's curatorship is evident in the group's logo: a "tunjo" wearing headphones. A tunjo is an anthropomorphic figure of the Muysca indigenous culture of the Cundinamarca and Boyaca regions of the Andes Mountains, where the city of Bogotá is located. While this image connects the group directly to local influences and commitments, it simultaneously speaks of an "open and plural" language from a poiesis subordinated to a particular sphere: that of the contemporary avant-garde.

As will be explained, La Distritofónica is linked to two ontological paradigms: jazz (particularly freer forms of the music) and experimental music (particularly traditions drawn from free improvisation and noise music). With these clarifications, I wish to show that the collective appeals to a condition of the Bogotá music field marked by a tendency to allow classical music and jazz to become the norm for musical understanding.[4] It is from this context, and in response to it, that La Distritofónica emerges: from a jazz anchored in academicism.[5]

It is worth noting the etymology of collective's name, La Distritofónica (district/phonic, or sounds of the district), which invokes the proximity of its artistic production to the city it inhabits: Bogotá, Colombia. Naturally, this characteristic exceeds the collective's name alone, and it is evident in the collection of paratexts and metatexts that link their artistic production with the city (see table 1[6]). What is interesting about this commitment is that such links are generally circumscribed to aesthetic experiences where improvisation (free in the majority of cases) and noise are consubstantial in La Distritofónica. Both are rooted in experiences common to the city's aural sphere, which is further correlated with problems such as sound pollution, traffic noise, and a high urban density, just to mention a few examples.

Thus, I argue, following the work of Daniel Martin Fiege, that the link between jazz and the concept of the "musical work" is unsatisfactory. Tracing the condition of "work" in the artistic-sound phenomena created by La Distritofónica to define its tentative ontological condition as jazz or not is insufficient.[7] Even incorporating normative delimitations of free jazz will prove sterile, simply because the aesthetic decisions that comprise La Distritofónica surpass this kind of nominal and prescriptive description.[8] Rather, I am interested in reviewing (1) the observations that the members themselves make about their artistic productions and that configure an intersubjective experiential network that shares aesthetic aspects with jazz itself and (2) elements of experimental practice that connect to traditions of free improvisation and noise.

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TABLE 1: PARATEXTUAL INFORMATION OF DISC TITLES AND TRACKS IN LA DISTRITOFÓNICA.

Group	Album	Year	Track
Primero mi Tía Quinteto	*Primero mi Tía Quinteto* [First My Aunt Quintet]	2005	• "Transmilenio" • "Tra Ico"
Ricardo Gallo Cuarteto	*Los Cerros Testigos* [The Hills Witness]	2005	• "La Distritofobia"
Tumbacatre	*Tumbacatre*	2006	• "Candelaria"
La Revuelta [The Riot]	*Agua* [Water]	2007	• "Rio Bogotá" [Bogotá's River]
Ricardo Gallo Cuarteto	*Urdimbres y Marañas* [Warps and Reeds]	2006	• "La Distritofobia"
Curupira	*Regenera*	2013	• "Décima con Jiménez" [10th Street and Jimenez Street] • "Sumergido en la ciudad" [Immersed in the City]
Ricardo Gallo Cuarteto	*Tribu de Asfalto* [Asphalt Tribe]	2013	• "Tribu de asfalto"
Ricardo Gallo Cuarteto	*En Transito* [In Transit]	2018	• "En Transito" • "Mikrotráfico"

Note: Certain titles have not been translated in order to maintain the symbolic power in their original language.

Improvisation is conceived in the West as the exemplary paradigm related to jazz, without being a sine qua non for jazz.[9] This even relates to views that observe the need for dynamism and experimentalism in jazz in order to maintain its relevance as a musical phenomenon.[10] However, beyond relating the discussion to purely nominal aspects, I am interested in linking La Distritofónica's music to intersubjective aspects that inform the artistic creation of the collective itself. The group's output suggests an aesthetic appreciation of the everyday, and particularly to experiences of the city that the members of La Distritofónica inhabit.[11] I argue that these elements constitute an ontology and musical practice, particularly if one understands the concept of improvisation as a metaphor of inhabiting.[12]

Improvisation as a Structuring Principle

Considering the role of improvisation allows us not only to align ontological links between jazz and experimental music but also to reveal intersubjective conditions that allow the local scene to be configured by musicians who share not only knowledge of jazz and experimental music but also understandings about local space.[13] La Distritofónica can be understood as an intersubjective circuit that is related to the "principle of charity" following the ideas of the philosopher Donald Davidson.[14] This perspective

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argues that intersubjective understanding is possible as long as the actors share the same belief system—in this case aesthetic beliefs—within the world in which they circulate. In fact, La Distritofónica involves actors from both jazz and experimental scenes. Thus, such interactions result in a sine qua non condition presupposed for understanding that triangulates, from a principle of linguistic familiarity, with the experience of others for a common goal.[15] That goal is the creation of a process-based music,[16] building upon a groundwork of free improvisation.

The analysis below considers the ontological aspect of improvisation—particularly improvisation performed within free jazz, a style often considered as disruptive and contrary to artistic practices that preceded it such as swing and bop.[17] This disruptive aspect of the style can be related to the concept of abjection. As Julia Kristeva writes, "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."[18] Precisely this "disrespect to the borders" becomes a transgression of a norm that contains an ontology for the musical. As will be explained below, this transgression is related to the concept of noise.

I will begin by recapitulating understandings of improvisation as a concept subordinate to that of composition, a history that dates back to the early nineteenth century.[19] By doing so, I seek to understand that free improvisation is not exclusively an aesthetic framework. Rather, it is a political framework that opposes aural regimes, premeditated traditions, and hegemonic compositional and interpretative stances.[20] To expand this position, I turn toward an ontology of the experimental, situating improvisation in La Distritofónica within traditions of noise music. This perspective is key to understanding improvisation itself, its nexus with the experimental, and its relation to the artistic work of La Distritofónica.

Improvisation, Experimentalism, Noise, and Abjection in the Jazz Scene of Bogotá

The work of La Distritofónica is best understood within paradigms of experimental music. Experimental music can be understood not as a preestablished and structured language but as an experience in itself.[21] It constitutes a nonprescriptive experience and is, above all, contingent to the context in which it is performed. The collective's connection to this tradition is evident in the fact that several members of La Distritofónica also participate extensively in musical contexts expressly related to the experimental music scene of Bogotá. A number of members, for example, are close friends and frequent collaborators with members of the Colombian Circle of Contemporary Music (CCMC in its Spanish initials).[22] Still others participate in performances, venues, and festivals related to higher education spheres in Bogotá, such as the Universidad de los Andes, the Academia Superior de Música de Bogotá

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or the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. As just one example, saxophonist María Angélica Valencia—curator of the "Festival Distritofónico" and member of La Distritofónica projects Asdrubal, La Revuelta, and Meridian Brothers—has participated in several experimental projects not directly linked to the collective such as MULA[23] or Mirlitorrinco.[24]

The aesthetics of experimentalist improvisation is something that can only be apprehended in and through each improvisation itself.[25] This fact necessitates conceiving it as process and product at the same time.[26] It cannot be constructed under preexisting conventions, but, rather, each performance constructs its own conventions as a communicative and relational mechanism.[27] It confronts the listener with elements of the unknown and challenges their subjectivity, constituting a particular normativity where the parameter of "the opposite" plays a vital role.[28] This process is itself improvisatory,[29] establishing an important value that undergirds the practice: that communication *itself* is an act of constant improvisation.[30]

In La Distritofónica, an ontology of jazz founded on works and/or standards is implicitly critiqued, namely because free improvisation does not contain within its ontology such a construction of tradition. Rather, the ontology of free improvisation is constituted as a disruptive discourse that is opposed to the treatment that improvisation has in conventional jazz[31] because it is conceived as a transgression of this "standard/work" tradition.[32] It considers the mainstream as a restriction[33] and free improvisation as a phenomenon that is "free to" create, to imagine, and (most importantly) to hear, but it is not "free from" the traditions that preceded it.[34] However, from a purely generative point of view, it is extremely complex to relate the experience of La Distritofónica to a particular tradition in a univocal manner. Indeed, bringing up the bop tradition of the mid-twentieth century and the free response of artists such as Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, and John Coltrane will be a natural point of comparison, but it is not sufficient to address to the aesthetic of La Distritofónica.[35] It would further be necessary to bring up the influences that the post-tonal scene drew from dodecaphonic and serial ideas as well as experimental traditions drawn from the ideas of John Cage (including the latter's rhizomatic epistemological conception, neither sequential nor teleological). This implies understanding improvisation as freedom at the level of expression, but not of choice,[36] an expression founded both on Davidson's principle of charity as well as on the experience of everyday life in Bogotá. This means that the mere fact of communication in music implies, according to Davidson, an intersubjective understanding based on the fact that musicians live in a city like Bogotá, where jazz and experimental music are common languages that they understand as modes of expression.

The concept of noise is also concomitant with La Distritofónica's poiesis. I understand noise not as delimited sound but as a "metadiscourse on sound and its social interpretation."[37] Its definition works in a relationship of mutual exclusion

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against the musical or, better yet, against what is defined as musical in a given culture.[38] In view of this, the word "noise" is a metatext that by reason of its cultural use acquires a phenomenological relationship with some event and/or sound material of negative and/or pejorative (abject) valence. This can be understood alongside other categories such as disorder, chaos, dissonance, distortion, and error, among others. The emancipation of noise as art has been a rather complex journey that directly confronts an artistic practice such as jazz. I can suggest that it is through noise that we are able to intuit the serial relations that link the heterogenetic modes through which everything comes to be in an ontology that does not believe in fixed identities, beings, and transcendent essence but only difference, becomings.[39]

Here appears a fundamental binding point that allows us to find connections between the concepts of improvisation and noise: the notion of process.[40] But by comprehending process as a metaphor that is in constant transformation (both in and outside of spheres of "music," per se),[41] it becomes possible to see beyond La Distritofonica's music alone and to further connect its work to the everyday life of the city itself. Following Kristeva, we can understand that noise is not an "absence of cleanliness" (that is, it is not an absence of normativity) but rather as "that which disturbs an identity, a system and an order," something that does not "respect limits,"[42] and, subsequently, something liminal. Under this argument, I suggest that experimental music constitutes a form of liminality that does not pretend to constitute a new regime and would directly clash with such a possibility.

In the urban context, it is vital to understand the ways that noise has been considered as a concomitant aspect of modern cities.[43] Although there is no clear and concise definition of noise from the ontological point of view, Liu Fangfang et al. refer to it as a combination of sounds that produces an unpleasant, annoying, and undesirable sensation and that can cause damage to the health of people who are exposed to it.[44] The World Health Organization further specifies decibel measurement as a mechanism for identifying so-called noise pollution.[45] In Colombia, there are particular legislations that regulate noise,[46] and it is an ongoing problem within Bogotá, especially in downtown areas.

The activities of La Distritofónica are centered around specific areas of the city, particularly the neighborhoods of Chapinero and Teusaquillo. These are the neighborhoods both where the majority of the members of La Distritofonica live and also where they most frequently present their music (through concerts, improvisation sessions, and so on). Some of the most prominent venues in these areas include matik-matik, Charlotte, and Acto latino. These venues have established themselves as crucial meeting places for the Distritofónica community over the last twenty years, to the point where artists sometimes refer to them metaphorically as "their home."

To bring up these localities is to point out a particular Bogotá. One where, according to Ramirez and Dominguez, there is a "severe problem of noise pollution

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in the main roads" due, among other factors, to a "historical absence of an efficient and massive public transportation system."[47] As can be deduced, issues surrounding transportation are a daily experience of the inhabitants of Bogotá and a frequent source of aural inspiration for the projects of La Distritofónica. As detailed in table 1, much of the paratextual information connecting its music to the city is related to themes of traffic and transportation. These expressions are never far removed from the chaos, irrationality, violence, and abject and liminal processes of listening to the city's noisy soundscape. For this reason, I argue that members of La Distritofónica share not only aesthetic ideologies but also aesthetic commitments that are directly linked to the city of Bogotá. And here I refer to aesthetics in its literal sense; that is, aesthesis as experience and consequently as a discipline that describes the experience itself.

Two examples from the collective's output serve as strong examples of the relationships between noise, improvisation, and urban space. As part of a documentary about the quintet Primero mi tía—one of the collective's germinal projects—drummer Jorge Sepúlveda points out that the group performs "a new way of interpreting currulao," a genre originally from the Colombian Pacific coast. The group fuses this style with a "strong influence of jazz language" with many influences of "Coltrane and Coleman," creating what Sepúlveda describes as (and here is the emphasis) "a very *Bogotá sound*."[48] It is precisely this "bogotánidad" that is crucial to understanding the collective's larger goals.

A second example is related to the recordings of the Ricardo Gallo quartet. Paratextual references to the city are evident dating from the group's very first production *Los Cerros Testigos* (The Hills Witness) from 2005. In Gallo's words, the album is "dedicated to my city Bogotá, which has been my stimulus, my origin and the *place of my reunion*."[49] The creation is further influenced by the daily aesthetic experience of its members in the city of Bogotá. This is also evident in the opinions of the drummer Jorge Sepúlveda who emphasizes that "we are children of a Bogotá, because it seems to me that the city has a lot to do [with our music. It is] chaotic, full of smog, noise, chaos, and other things too (. . .) our music. If you abstract from being the one who plays it, and just listen to it, it sounds like Bogotá, because that is where we grew up."[50] Following this opinion, I also quote bassist Juan Manuel Toro who, referring to Gallo, says that his creative practice shows a relationship with Bogotá as "an aggressive and noisy modern city."[51]

As it has been suggested, an ontology of jazz thought from intersubjectivity allows us to understand the way in which in La Distritofónica there are dialogues that, from the same aesthetic language, can generate a variety of projects. Part of the understanding of this ontological condition is directly linked to an intersubjective experience resulting from the aesthesis that the members of the collective have lived in the city of Bogota. In order to understand this relationship between the aesthesis of the everyday and the artistic production of La Distritofónica, I use the concept of metaphor to explain these connections.

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La Distritofónica as a Metaphor of a Chaotic City

In order to understand the relationship between music and metaphor, it is necessary to understand that there is no constitutive aspect in music that intrinsically links the sound itself to some kind of extramusical experience. This is why expressivity in music results "not an attribute of the work as such but is simply attributed to the work."[52] In this sense, I understand metaphor as a basic structure for understanding the musical, which allows us to avoid assuming, creating, or generating any kind of immediate relationship between sound and language.[53] This raises the problem of signification in relation to experience itself, in this case aural experience. Thus, we can agree with Lawrence Zbikowski "that meaning is grounded in embodied experience."[54] In the case of the members of La Distritofónica, this "embodied experience" is related to an aural experience of the city of Bogotá.[55]

The use of the concept of metaphor and its relation with a cultural (and aural) practice allows us to correlate characteristic words of musical terminology with sonorous aspects of La Distritofónica's music to explain a domain that I call "Bogotá sound." This, in turn, helps to understand links between the music and the city as a "metaphor for the experience of the modern world."[56] This model generates a synergy between the experience of the everyday by members of La Distritofónica and their subsequent artistic production.

Following the idea of La Distritofonica's music as a metaphor for Bogotá, the purpose of this research is not to correlate characteristic aspects of the geography of music in the city in order to create cartographies[57] nor to reveal aspects of identity.[58] Rather, from an analysis centered on listening,[59] I suggest that La Distritofónica seeks to promote an understanding of the aural experience of the city of Bogotá as experienced via sound, social life, and everyday dynamics. This phenomenological/sensorial turn in the social sciences has allowed the urban to be rethought not from arbitrary ideological aspects (civility, modernity, etc.) but from the importance of the corporal and the way in which a territory is inhabited from corporeality—or from listening. In this sense, the music city of La Distritofónica is conceived from processes of improvisation-noise within the music, understood in conjunction with its artistic production within Bogotá. This process moves beyond being "resistance toward the dominant ideals of music, and consequently, of the larger society,"[60] and instead becomes a metaphor that operates as what Ana María Ochoa-Gautier understands as entextualization and transduction of the particular sonority of Bogotá.[61]

Aurality and the Metaphor as a Node: How Does Bogotá Sound?

As key concepts to trace and characterize a normativity that regulated the uses of Spanish in nineteenth-century Colombia, Ochoa-Gautier introduces two concepts that she refers to as entextualization and transduction. Entextualization is defined

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as "the act of framing the musical object to be studied through multiple modes of 'capturing' it."[62] I relate entextualization to the mechanism of creation-improvisation in La Distritofónica to broaden the understanding of its artistic endeavor: the link between an experience located at an intersubjective level in the city of Bogotá and its sound-musical discourse as an urban metaphor. In other words, an acoustic source (in this case the sonosphere of Bogotá) is mediated by the aesthesis ("Distritofónica" we could say) of some particular subjects (members of the collective) and entextualized in music. Furthermore, the notion of transduction, understood as "the transformation of one form of matter or energy (sound waves, light) into another (vibrations, biochemical transmitters, etc.)," is adapted in order to understand the "intercultural context of mutual encounters of alterities,"[63] an idea Ochoa-Gautier draws from the ideas of anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.[64] The music of La Distritofónica is thereby understood as a transduction of the acoustic components of Bogotá's sonosphere, which is then entextualized using the semantic aspects linking jazz, improvisation, and experimental music as nodes for pragmatic possibility and poiesis.

This series of aspects leads to understanding the music of La Distritofónica as a political activity. This political aspect is evident when considering cultural policies that regulate the musical development of the city, such as those from the Instituto Distrital de las Artes de Bogotá (Idartes), among other entities. To demonstrate this point, I highlight a characteristic example that demonstrates the types of cultural critique embedded in La Distritofónica's work.

One major event sponsored by Idartes is the Bogota International Classical Music Festival (Festival Internacional de Música Clásica de Bogotá), which has been held since 2013. Each edition of the festival has carried a subtitle linking the city with specific composers and/or canonical traditions of European art music: "Bogotá Is Beethoven" (2013), "Bogotá Is Mozart" (2015), "Bogotá Is Romantic Russia" (2017), "Bogotá Is Brahms, Schubert and Schumann" (2019), "Bogotá Is Baroque: Bach, Handel, Vivaldi" (2021), and "Bogotá is France: La Belle Epoque" (2023). These subtitles suggest a univocal relationship with classist and elitist overtones. The comparison between city and music has been criticized not only by members of La Distritofónica but also by members of other groups such as the CCMC.[65] The subtitles refer to problematic constructions of "purified listenings"[66] that effectively derive from conceptions that are unrelated and decontextualized from their place of emergence. That is, the conception of music as an autonomous and pure art represents an imaginary, unreal, paradoxical, and contradictory proposition to those who face the aural experience of Bogotá every day. Bogotá is not Mozart, and the political proposal of La Distritofónica is geared toward critiquing this perspective both by developing new ontologies of experimental performances and by linking those ontologies to the city itself.

Such efforts can be seen especially clearly in the curatorial mission pursued by the Festival Distritofónico, a music festival produced by the group. According to

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Alejandro Forero, a founding member of the collective, the festival seeks "musics that are experimenting, that come up with interesting products or that in the end we like"[67] in a way that presents itself as an objection or disobedience to the classical festival's prescription of what "Bogotá is." This is evident even in the series of responses that La Distritofónica has received—some of them pejorative and negative—from certain cultural sectors. The curator of the festival, Maria Angélica Valencia, emphasizes the choices made to create a festival that transcends genres:

> To break the mindset of a genre-bound festival is an idea of the festival—that's why it is called distritofónico. And although many people say: "These people make a lot of noise," they have not gone into detail or listened to all the proposals that are in La Distritofónica. There are things that are pure noise, but also traditional music; there are things that are pop and rock; there are jazz things; there is a bit of everything.[68]

This type of opinion reveals an apparent and irreconcilable relationship between public cultural policy and particular initiatives that fall into abjection and liminality for not falling in line with the ontologies and listeners that make up such policies. This is emphasized by opinions expressed in certain Bogotan magazines that reviewed the festival and its relation to the soundscape of the city. Andrés Gualdron in *Vice* magazine writes: "Ten years ago, when the musical collective La Distritofónica was born, I had the impression that I was finally listening to a sound that did justice to this schizoid, noisy and extravagant capital, with music that exhibited, without any inhibition, these same characteristics."[69]

A similar opinion was given by Mexican journalist Oscar Adad, in reference to the 2014 edition of the Festival Distritofónico: "Bogota is a city of contrasts. . . . Hordes of wild cars, high decibels and continuous warnings of crime that rejoices with impunity in the streets . . . are part of the multicolored painting of the city. . . . And it is precisely among the urban chaos where ten years ago a group of young artists [La Distritofónica] decided to start composing new music for the city's soundtrack."[70]

Similar arguments could be made on behalf of the CCMC, as well as previous collectives and projects such as Radio Mixticius or Radio Pachone Internacional. Accordingly, it will be necessary to review the way in which the Distritofónica initiative has built an "aural signatura" of a particular Bogotá in the last ten years but understood as a liminal one. The group's work links with new aural and sonic experiences and, finally, it lays bare the political consequences of its aesthetic proposals in the long term.

In March 2012, Bogota was designated by UNESCO as a Creative City of Music, a title conferred given the diversity of musical expressions that circulate in the city, but which falls short thanks to the institutionalism that still governs the city's musical practices and which is based in educational academicism. This status is criticized by the collective La Distritofónica from its ontological transgressions in

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jazz and its versions of Bogotá, highlighting nominal problems in the city's cultural policy, its lack of openness to new artistic and musical proposals, and the necessary attention to the problem of the aural in all its dimensions: ecological, sociological, and anthropological.

Notes

1. See Juan Carlos Franco, "Un breve recuento de la historia del jazz en Colombia," in *Jazz en español. Derivas hispanoamericanas*, ed. Julián Ruesga Bono (Veracruz, México: Universidad Veracruzana, 2013), 223–248; Juan S. Ochoa Escobar, "Los discursos de superioridad del jazz frente a otras músicas populares contemporáneas," *El artista*, no. 7 (2010): 11–27; Juan S. Ochoa, "El canon del jazz en Colombia: Una aproximación a través de artículos periodísticos," *Cuadernos de música, artes visuales y artes escénicas* 6, no. 1 (2011): 81–102.
2. Andrés Gualdrón, "Experimentaciones extremas: Se viene el Festival Distritofónico," *VICE*, October 11, 2014, https://www.vice.com/es/article/zndk9e/distritofnico.
3. The record label already has forty-one productions bringing together a variety of projects. It also produced its own Festival Distritofónico, now discontinued, which took place annually between 2012 and 2017. This event served as a platform for the collective's projects as well as other groups made up of local and foreign collaborators. See Diego Alberto Gómez, "El devenir de la música andina colombiana en el colectivo La Distritofónica: El caso del cuarteto de Ricardo Gallo: Diálogo entre tópicos, competencias y símbolos nacionales" (MA diss., Universidad de Chile, 2014).
4. This process of canonization of jazz in Bogotá only became visible in the 1990s with the creation of jazz programs in the music departments of some universities, such as the Universidad Pontificia Javeriana. Before that, the practice of jazz was open to different dialogues and characterized by amateurism and a musical scene that centered around certain bars and cafes. For more information, see Federico Ochoa Escobar, "Lineamientos para la educación musical superior a partir de las vidas y obras de Justo Almario y Antonio Arnedo. Una propuesta aplicada al área de saxofón del Conservatorio Adolfo Mejía (Cartagena, Colombia)," (PhD diss., Universidad de Antioquia, 2022).
5. This academicism is related to the educational background of most of the members of the collective, mainly its founder Alejandro Forero and the curator of the Festival Distritofónico, María Angélica Valencia. This training took place in one of the most important universities in the country: the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. It is in this academic and political context that the introductory and invitational text of La Distritofónica has a place. However, I would argue that the dialogue with sonorities and rhythms based on Colombian traditional music (mostly from the Caribbean) was central for the academic project beneath Javeriana's jazz program. As exemplified by the work of Antonio Arnedo (a central figure in this program) and bands in which Javeriano students played (i.e., polaroid), the program entailed a negotiation between the local (traditional music) and the global. For further information, see Ochoa Escobar, "Lineamientos para la educación musical superior."
6. A few terms in the table are worth particular note. "Transmilenio" refers to the urban public transportation system *par excellence* in Bogotá. "Tumbacatre" is an aphrodisiac beverage from the pacific coast of Colombia. "Candelaria" is one of the most iconic and touristic places of downtown Bogotá.
7. See Daniel Martin Feige, "Ontology of Improvisation and Jazz," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Improvisation in the Arts*, eds. Bertinetto Alessandro and Marcello Ruta (New York: Routledge, 2022), 78.
8. If one wishes to appeal to the markers that "regulate" free jazz, the topic can be reviewed in Andrys Onsman and Robert Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz: Chasing Ideas* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2019) and Daniele Goldoni, "Forms of

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Improvisation and Experimentalism," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Improvisation in the Arts*, eds. Bertinetto Alessandro and Marcello Ruta (New York: Routledge, 2022), 243–258.

9. Lee Brown, David Goldblatt, and Theodore Gracyk, *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2018), 181.
10. Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 2.
11. Katya Mandoki, *Estética cotidiana y juegos de la cultura: Prosaica l* (México: Siglo veintiuno editores, 2006).
12. Goldoni, "Forms of Improvisation and Experimentalism," 253.
13. According to Philip Tagg, "Musical communication works best when those at the emitting and receiving ends of the process share similar sociocultural norms and the same basic store of signs." In this sense I quote the author's treatment of the concept of intersubjectivity when he emphasizes that it "arises when at least two individuals experience the same thing in a similar way." Here we speak particularly of an urban sonosphere that is perceived in a similar way by subjects located in the city but who transit through particular aesthetic scenes or worlds, namely those of jazz and experimental music. See Philip Tagg, *Music's Meanings: A Modern Musicology for Non-Musos* (New York: Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, 2013), 195–196.
14. Sam McAuliffe explains the nature of jazz from the ideas of the American philosopher Donald Davidson by expounding the ideas that the philosopher makes on the concept of the "principle of charity," a methodological resource that explains rationality in intersubjective communication. According to Davidson, the concept is "a prerequisite for understanding" (Davidson in McAuliffe, 24) and a "methodological presupposition that helps us to resolve interpretative difficulties" (24). In this sense, and through this concept, McAuliffe brings rationality and coherence to the practice of improvisation itself. Although his position is linguistic and therefore structuralist, the practical use of the resource is striking. In this order, he defends an ontology of jazz that differs from discursive analyses oriented toward prescriptive ontologies, understanding the phenomenon of improvisation as a space of dialogue and intersubjective consensus. This perspective happens to be quite useful for understanding the artistic endeavor of La Distritofónica. Sam McAuliffe, "Improvisation, Ontology, and Davidson: Exploring the Improvisational Character of Language and Jazz," *Context* no. 48 (2023): 21–33.
15. McAuliffe, "Improvisation, Ontology, and Davidson," 31.
16. Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 31.
17. Goldoni, "Forms of Improvisation and Experimentalism," 243; Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 17.
18. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.
19. Goldoni, "Forms of Improvisation and Experimentalism," 245.
20. See Natalia Bieletto-Bueno, "Regímenes aurales a través de la escucha musical: Ideologías e instituciones en el siglo xxi," *El Oído Pensante* 7, no. 2 (2019): 111–134; Goldoni, "Forms of Improvisation and Experimentalism."
21. See Ana Alonso-Minutti, Eduardo Herrera, and Alejandro Madrid, *Experimentalisms in Practice: Music Perspectives from Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Feige, "Ontology of Improvisation and Jazz."
22. See https://ccmcmusica.com/ for further information.
23. According to one of its members, bass player Santiago Botero, MULA is defined as a "band that is torn between the intense sounds of punk noise, post rock and progressive rock, not without denying its free jazz and experimental avant-garde past" (see https://www.boterosantiago.com/mula for further information).

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24. This refers to a quartet from Bogotá that played its debut performance at matik-matik—one of the city's iconic venues for jazz—on July 27, 2017. Their lovely, intimate recital established the group as a prime parlour music ensemble. The group exhibits musical habits that are concrete and surreal, drawing from movie soundtrack sounds, naive and playful chamber music, instrumental proto-rock with an experimental bend, and picturesque jazz. See https://duretdoux.bandcamp.com/album/odas-mixtas-para-criaturas-m-nimas for further information.
25. Feige, "Ontology of Improvisation and Jazz," 79.
26. Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 21.
27. McAuliffe, "Improvisation, Ontology, and Davidson," 33.
28. Goldoni, "Forms of Improvisation and Experimentalism," 250.
29. Hannaford in Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 32.
30. McAuliffe, "Improvisation, Ontology, and Davidson," 32.
31. See Feige, "Ontology of Improvisation and Jazz," 81.
32. Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 22.
33. Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 28.
34. Rosen in Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 25.
35. I bring these artists in the discussion because they were explicit influences for La Distritofónica. A broader discussion should include the influence of other free jazz styles in the Colombian context such as the work of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). My research did not reveal any direct nexus between La Distritofónica and the AACM.
36. Onsman and Burke, *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz*, 28.
37. David Novak, "Noise," in *Keywords in Sound*, eds. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 126.
38. Novak, "Noise," 126.
39. Greg Hainge, *Noise Matters: Towards an Ontology of Noise* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 14.
40. Hainge, *Noise Matters*, 16.
41. Brandon Labelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 222.
42. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 8.
43. See Natalia Bieletto-Bueno, *Ciudades vibrantes: Sonido y experiencia aural urbana en América Latina* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Universidad Mayor SpA, 2021). The notion of noise in this sense is understood as concomitant of a sonosphere—that is, "the perception of the set of audible sounds around us," according to Rainer Krause in the seminar "Historia del paisaje sonoro." It opens, naturally, questions of acoustemological order—as Steven Feld has argued in his article "Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea"—that respond to the "local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination embodied in the culturally particular sense of place." In this sense, I argue that estesis (perception) and sense of place are concomitantly linked, i.e., the perception of a soundsphere conditions one's sense of place.
44. Fangfang Liu et al., "On the Definition of Noise," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communication* 9 (2022): 406.
45. World Health Organization, "Environmental Noise," in *Compendium of WHO and Other UN Guidance on Health and Environment, 2022 Update* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2022).

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46. See Julian Arango, "Cartografías de la sorpresa: Prácticas artísticas y paisajes sonoros urbanos en Colombia," *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas* 13, no. 1 (2018); Johana Molina and German Villalba "Estudio del ruido en la troncal Transmilenio tramo héroes—museo de oro como indicador de calidad del servicio y elemento urbano en el corredor" (undergraduate thesis, Universidad de La Salle de Bogotá, 2015); Alberto Ramírez and Efraín Domínguez, "Contaminación acústica de origen vehicular en la localidad de Chapinero (Bogotá, Colombia)," *Gestión y ambiente* 18, no. 1 (2015): 17–28; Andres Bustos, "Paisaje sonoro en la ciudad de Bogotá una aproximación a las características de frecuencia e intensidad del sonido en el espacio urbano" (undergraduate thesis, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, 2013).
47. Alberto Ramírez and Efraín Domínguez further point out that "the Transmilenio system," the main integrated transportation system of the city, "does not generate less noise pollution." Ramírez and Domínguez, "Contaminación acústica," 25.
48. "Primeromitiadocumental.Mp4." YouTube video, June 24, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JP_wO2gPKuY&list=PL77pyShP_CFCYsvX_5NoKoXogzGdUFroT.
49. Booklet of the album *Los Cerros Testigos*, 2005.
50. Interview with the quartet in LaMakinita. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbrusAjFVGw.
51. Juan Manuel Toro, interview with author, October 22, 2014, Bogotá, Colombia.
52. Lawrence Zbikowski, "Metaphor in Music," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond Gibbs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 504.
53. Zbikowski, "Metaphor in Music," 510.
54. Zbikowski, "Metaphor in Music," 511.
55. As may be intuited, this experience naturally exceeds the aural and surrounds sensory aspects in a holistic manner. For methodological and epistemological reasons, it will be understood that in the context of this article we are dealing exclusively with the aural condition, although it would be necessary to extend the discussion to the other senses.
56. Chambers quoted in Brett Lashua et al., *Sounds and the City: Popular Music Place and Globalization* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2:2.
57. See John Connell and Chris Gibson, *Sound Tracks: Popular Music Identity and Place* (London: Routledge, 2003); Lily Kong, "Popular Music in Geographical Analyses," *Progress in Human Geography* 19, no. 2 (1995): 183–198.
58. See Martin Stokes, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford, England: Berg, 1994).
59. See Bieletto-Bueno, *Ciudades vibrantes*.
60. Kohl in Hainge, *Noise Matters*, 16.
61. See Ana María Ochoa-Gautier, "Sonic Transculturation, Epistemologies of Purification and the Aural Public Sphere in Latin America," *Social Identities* 12, no. 6 (2006): 803–825; Ana María Ochoa-Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
62. According to Ochoa-Gautier, entextualization is a form of transduction that produces written registers of sound. From this perspective I argue that the act of making music in La Distritofónica involves the transductive effect from sonosphere to music. See Ochoa-Gautier, "Sonic Transculturation," 805.
63. Ochoa-Gautier, "Sonic Transculturation," 805.
64. Ochoa-Gautier, *Aurality*, 21.
65. Composers such as Rodolfo Acosta or Sergio Cote, both members of the CCMC and living in Bogotá, critique this idea of "universal music" that is implied in the cultural policy

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that guides the "Bogotá is" festivals. They refer to this "universality that it is coloniality" (Rodolfo Acosta) and that "homegenetizes and imposes the musical (producer, duration, sounds, genres, etc.)" leading to a norm that "institutionalizes [the music] from the State and the mechanisms of the capitalist machinery" (personal communications from both composers to the author).

66. See Ochoa-Gautier, "Sonic Transculturation."
67. Alejandro Forero, interview with author, July 20, 2014, Bogotá, Colombia.
68. Maria Angélica Valencia, interview with author, June 30, 2014, Bogotá, Colombia.
69. Andrés Gualdrón, "Experimentaciones extremas: Se viene el Festival Distritofónico."
70. Oscar Adad, "Festival Distritofónico 2014, diez años del colectivo La Distritofónica—Primera parte," *Voodoo Noise*, October 30, 2014, https://voodoonoise.wordpress.com/2014/10/30/festival-distritofonico-2014-diez-anos-del-colectivo-la-distritofonica-primera-parte/.

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